



MICHIGAN FEDERATION
OF TEACHERS &
SCHOOL RELATED PERSONNEL

Date: March 15, 2005

To: Senate Education Committee

From: Louise Somalski

Subject: Education Flexibility & Empowerment Law (House Bills 4079 and 4080)

Under **House Bills 4079 and 4080**, a school district could apply to the state superintendent of public instruction for a contract that would allow the school district to **waive state and federal rules and laws** in exchange for a certain level of performance by the district.

The Michigan Federation of Teachers and School Related Personnel strongly oppose these bills because:

- ▶ This legislation leaves **waiver authority** up to one person in one department.
- ▶ These **waivers are too broad** with unforeseen consequences.
- ▶ The Michigan Department of Education is already **understaffed with no ability for oversight**.
- ▶ **Automatic approval** after 60 days if no Michigan Department of Education response is received by the district is unwise.
- ▶ Districts already **have wide discretion** to tailor their programs under current laws and regulations.
- ▶ The history of special education rule waivers has resulted in: **increased class size; increased teacher staffing ratios; and increased maximum case loads.**

bk:opeiu42aflcio

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE:

419 S. Washington, Suite 301B
Lansing, MI 48933
(517) 371-4300
FAX (517) 371-1922

MAIN OFFICE:

2661 East Jefferson Avenue
Detroit, MI 48207
(313) 393-2200
FAX (313) 393-2236
www.mftrsrb.org

NORTHERN MICHIGAN OFFICE:

202 Huron Street
Grayling, MI 49738
(989) 348-4191
FAX (989) 348-4178